

The explanation of this attempted calm appropriation of the Register and Directory by the Kaplan

Medical Publishing Co., is a very simple one. Indeed, it is almost too simple when one really sees into it.

It is not an easy matter to start a medical journal and quickly secure a large circulation, upon which advertising rates are based. If you were to start one to-morrow you would find that you would lose money for a long time before you had enough subscribers to make it an object for anyone to advertise in your publication; and you would find it very slow work to get subscribers in a territory already supplied with several medical journals. But suppose you could, in some way, put into your medical (?) journal something that would make a demand for it; that would make a few thousand physicians require it? If that were the case and you could make a demand for it by say 2,000 physicians, you could afford to give it to them for nothing—for a year or so—knowing full well that eventually you would get your money back from the advertising, and that you could, when you had established the demand, charge a subscription price for your publication instead of giving it away. It is never safe to predicate exactly what other peoples' motives may or may not be, and we are not sure that this was the motive or the intention of the Kaplan Medical Publishing Company. But, it is certain that, by including the register and directory as a part of a quarterly medical publication, an instant demand was secured for that publication. To how many members would the "Practitioner's Digest" be of any value if it were not for the inclusion of the register and directory? And how long do you suppose it would continue to be sent to you "free"? Just think these things over; and remember that it is very nice to get "something for nothing"; nice for the fellow who does the "getting."

The Council of the State Society was not in any way a party to this appropriation of the Register and Directory by Mr. Henry Kaplan

or the Kaplan Medical Publishing Company. Quite the contrary.

In 1906, after the fire, a verbal contract was made with Kaplan allowing him to issue the Register at his own risk and to get what he could out of the advertising which was to be subject to the approval of the Publication Committee. In 1907 a written contract, drawn up by our attorney, was entered into between the Society (through the Council) and Henry Kaplan, which was practically the same as the verbal contract; we were to furnish the information, changes, correct the proof, etc., and he was to furnish us with enough copies for our members and to get what he could out of the advertising. This contract was renewed in writing in 1908 and again, and *after the proposition to print the register as part of a quarterly medical publication had been rejected by the House of Delegates of the State Society*, in 1909. In passing, it may be said that prior to 1906, the Society pub-

lished the book, paying Mr. Kaplan the liberal commission of 33 1-3% on the advertisements secured; the book was thus always published at a loss to the Society. Mr. Kaplan had been identified with the work of securing advertisements for the Society's publications for some years and doubtless there is, in the minds of many people, an impression that he is still connected in some way with the Society. We do not know that any representations were made to the effect that the "Practitioners' Digest" (including the Register and Directory) was endorsed by the Society or that the Society had anything to do with it. But the fact remains that a very large number of people seem to be of the opinion that the publication in question is endorsed by, or approved by the State Society. This could not be the case, for the Society had already, by a vote of the House of Delegates, rejected the proposition absolutely. It was thought to be unwise to aid in starting a privately-owned medical journal over which the Society would have neither advertising nor editorial control. It was tantamount to giving away, for nothing, the property of the Society. And so the matter stands. Mr. Kaplan has clearly violated his contract with the Society, has told the House of Delegates most impudently that he will pay no attention to the wishes of the Society and that he will do what he pleases with the property of the Society. Consequently, the Council has ordered suit against Mr. Kaplan for these various reasons. Those members of the Society who are in any way helping Mr. Kaplan, either by sending in changes of address, writing for his publication or otherwise, are merely aiding him to take away from themselves some of their own property and to build up, through the false semi-connection with the State Society, a privately-owned medical (?) publication which might, in time, be as bad in the matter of its advertised fakes as most of the other privately-owned medical (?) journals are at the present time. But it is up to the members of the Society to determine whether they shall give away their property or keep it in their own hands.

Probably a considerable majority of voters, especially in the larger centers of population, are either poor or of but moderate means; comparatively few could be truthfully called wealthy.

And yet, singularly enough, the majority seems to fail consistently and persistently to guard its own interests. The man of wealth can build his house in the healthiest and most desirable section; he can so plan it as to get the maximum of sunshine and fresh air; he can provide for himself and for his family every littlest thing that makes for the maintenance of health. All this the more-than-average voter cannot do. The tuberculotic is generally of the poorer class, especially in cities, and he is the victim of insanitary surroundings, improper living quarters, insufficient sunshine and fresh air—and of his own ignorance and indolence in the matter of taking advantage of his might, the majority vote. Several years ago this JOURNAL devoted con-

siderable space to the argument that, in San Francisco, the labor unions were in control of the situation and that it would be the part of wisdom for them to provide for themselves in the matter of unexcelled hospital facilities; and yet it was a struggle to get even tolerance when the effort was made to secure funds for a proper City and County Hospital. The very class then (and now) in control of the city government of San Francisco is the class that suffers most from the privations which follow upon illness. When the laborer falls sick he must needs, almost always, promptly go into debt, for at best he has small chance to save up much money. The wealthy man can pay for any hospital luxuries that he chooses; but the poor man, the majority voter, must soon, if his illness lasts any length of time or is such as to call for hospital treatment, be sent to the city or county institution to be cared for at the public expense. This same singular apathy has very recently been noticed in San Francisco, where the element in control—the labor unions—fails to see the wisdom of guarding their own interests. Ordinances were passed some time ago, compelling the landlord to furnish a minimum amount of light and air when building his tenements. Quite recently a strong effort has been made to alter these building ordinances so as to permit the landlord to cut down this allotment of light and air and thus get a little more money from his land—at the expense of the health of the poor. In spite of protests from sanitarians, the Board of Health, prominent architects, charitable organizations, etc., it rather appears, at the present writing, as though a labor union Board of Supervisors and a labor union Mayor would voluntarily and stupidly give away a large portion of their present right to air, sun and health. It is, indeed, a queer world.

MEDICINE'S LITERARY JUNGLE.

In a recent article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* Dr. Edward Jackson, of Denver, views with dismay the ever extending circle of medical literature but does not prescribe a remedy. The physician, with periodicals heaped upon his office table and very limited leisure, selects articles whose titles appeal to him or those whose authors he holds in high esteem. A very few are to be read with the greatest care; sometimes more than once. A limited number embody the results of experimentation and their value is usually in inverse ratio to their length. Others, stilted in style and verbose in expression, have been written for some "occasion"; not because the writer has any message to deliver but because he or someone else believes that he should be heard. This class contributes largely to the journalistic mire in which we all flounder. We grasp eagerly the article which collates a series of cases and look for the deductions which the author draws from them. But here we are sometimes disappointed. The writer may be a famous specialist, more concerned with impressing upon the reader the number of operations

which he has done in this particular field, or the many patients with the same group of symptoms who have come under his eye, than in imparting valuable information.

S. Weir Mitchell has said that there are very few individual case histories which merit printing and yet there is no doubt that much valuable material is lost by practitioners neglecting to publish extraordinary conditions. In a recent talk with the Librarian of the Surgeon-General's Library at Washington the writer was informed that case reports, no matter how obscure the journal in which they appear, are always catalogued with great care. The magnitude of this task can be appreciated from his statement that one volume of the great catalogue will be necessary to cover the titles of articles on Tuberculosis published since 1893. It must be affirmed, however, that the recounting of the "case" is of generally greater interest to the narrator than to his audience.

The article which embodies a critical review of our knowledge of a subject and then adds a little more is of distinct value. It places within our grasp a series of facts which may possibly have been gathered only after long and diligent reading and observation, while these facts form an illuminating setting for the grains of truth which the writer presents as his offering to the healing art.

The subdued reaction which has taken place against clinical articles has led to many absurd publications from laboratory men. You read rather languidly some forty pages of text in which the author endeavors to perfect himself in a particular technic in experimental surgery. This is of no importance to you but of the greatest import to the author. After narrating possibly fifty experiments in detail he arrives at conclusions which could have been expressed in a single well-worded paragraph. A man may labor assiduously in experimental work for months and yet have nothing new to impart. Those who have thus toiled know that laboratory life is also made up of the little things, but why the reader should be regaled with them it is difficult to understand. Here are a few choice bits taken at random from authors who cover pages of expensive broad-margin paper with such drivel:

"July 1. Dog wags tail to-day." (Exhibiting author's acumen.)

"Sept. — Entered recovery room to see dog take last three breaths." (Note the accuracy of this statement.)

"Aug. 6. Dog growls when approached so I could not make usual observations."

"The black and white mongrel (No. 36) was killed in a dog fight on the roof."

There are touches of pathos about this work that have a strong altruistic, though a doubtful scientific, value.

The man who has taken advantage of his clinical experiences, who has thought and studied over the questions to which they give rise and has added to his particular knowledge by extensive reading, is always worthy of a hearing, whether he be a Uni-